



“RENEWING *the* PROMISE *of* SYRACUSE”

A 50 Point Plan for a 21st Century City

the PLAN

As Mayor, I will strive to improve the quality of life in the City of Syracuse by developing and implementing progressive policies steeped in innovation, transparency, community engagement, and a zeal for bold, equitable leadership that provides 21st Century responses to Syracuse's 21st Century challenges and opportunities.

My 50 Point Plan will cover six major policy areas: Economic Development and Job Creation, Education and Youth, Public Safety, Sustainability and the Environment, Community Development, Housing, and Neighborhoods, and Government Modernization and Efficiency. Within each of these six areas I will outline broad goals and the specific strategies which collectively will create a critical mass of public action. This outline will provide clarity to city government that will bring transparency for our citizens, predictability for business people, and a cohesive plan of action that will drive the operations of a united city workforce toward a cogent vision. The policy strategies found herein will also pull from best practices found in cities around the country and around the world. These areas provide the framework for a platform that will usher in an era of innovation and vigor in city government.

While setting goals and defining strategies that will bring about the change our community so desperately needs, the links between these policy areas will also be clearly illustrated. Focused solutions and targeted actions in each area will be imperative to achieve significant results, but it is this holistic and integrated approach to governance that will bring about synergistic impacts and lasting change. Throughout this document you will find an emphasis on coordination within city government that gets departments and their personnel out of their traditional silos and into a more dynamic and creative atmosphere. This atmosphere will be the engine that creates efficiencies in the government and generates multi-disciplinary solutions to meet the complex problems our city faces.

Section One

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT *and* JOB CREATION

Section Two

EDUCATION *and* YOUTH

Section Three

PUBLIC SAFETY

Section Four

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING *and*
NEIGHBORHOODS**

Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY *and* the ENVIRONMENT

Section Six

**GOVERNMENT MODERNIZATION *and*
EFFICIENCY**



Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY *and the* ENVIRONMENT

The Syracuse and Central New York area was first settled by the people of the Onondaga Nation. The Onondagas, the keepers of the Central Fire of the Iroquois Confederacy, have lived in these lands for many hundreds of years. Their way of life has been one of harmony with nature and attention to the effects that humans have on each other and the rest of the world. One tenet of their philosophy is to make decisions today with consideration for the needs of the seventh generation into the future.

We must honor this heritage and always be mindful of the effects, both short-term and long-term, of the decisions we make as a community. Along with amazing achievements in science, technology and communications the history of our nation since the industrial revolution has also been one of rapid resource consumption, sprawling urban development and enormous population growth. This growth has not always been well-managed and has often had negative impacts on our natural environment as well as human health. Locally we must be diligent in our decision-making. The way that the City of Syracuse pursues development and conducts municipal operations must be in keeping with principles of sustainability. We have a responsibility to ourselves, the world and future generations to be good stewards of our environment.

Sustainability is not just about the natural environment however. Good policies and practices in sustainability consider social justice, economic viability as well as ecological health. The decisions made at City Hall should always be with an eye towards these fundamentals.

Becoming a more sustainable city is more than just following recent trends and hopping on the bandwagon. “Going green” needs to be more than just a catch phrase. We must choose to be a leader in sustainable practices, not just because it’s the wave of the future, but because following sustainability means creating a more environmentally friendly city, cultivating a higher quality of life and becoming more fiscally responsible.

Many cities are taking significant steps to make their cities and municipal operations more sustainable. Some cities have hired sustainability advisors or coordinators. Some have instituted green zoning codes and design regulations to promote green building and more sustainable design. Some cities have completed long-range plans that set specific targets for greater sustainability, like the Greenworks Philadelphia plan. Cities like Portland, Oregon have merged planning functions with surrounding towns and villages to create regulatory authorities that advance smart growth principles and decisions.

The City of Syracuse must explore ways that we can move into the future with innovative strategies for reducing our carbon footprint, taking better care of our water resources, providing more sustainable transportation options, and promoting greater local food and energy independence. These are not easy steps. Governments are not used to operating this way. But these are important steps. We can not put these challenges we face off for our children and grandchildren to deal with.

It is time for our city government to take bold steps in making our community a more sustainable place to live, work and raise a family – not just for today, but for generations into the future.



MINER
FOR MAYOR

Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY and the ENVIRONMENT

(summary)

GOALS

- **Reduce Syracuse's carbon footprint.**
- **Reduce negative impacts on the Onondaga Creek watershed.**
- **Reduce the volume and impact of energy consumption in the City of Syracuse.**
- **Foment smart growth principles in the Syracuse metropolitan area.**
- **Improve the City of Syracuse's local water, food and energy independence.**
- **Improve Syracuse's air quality especially in currently high-traffic areas.**

STRATEGY #33

Equip city government with personnel that can explore and implement sustainability solutions for our government and our city.

STRATEGY #34

Conduct a carbon footprint and ecological impact assessment for the city and for city operations and develop a long-term strategy for reductions.

STRATEGY #35

Work with OCRRA and others to increase recycling options and capacity for residents, businesses and in public places.

STRATEGY #36

Explore the development of "green codes" in the City of Syracuse to increase energy generation and efficiency options, promote urban agriculture and increase efforts to improve storm water management.

STRATEGY #37

Make green infrastructure techniques, urban forestry and energy efficiency measures the first choice for City operations – not the exception.

STRATEGY #38

Work with the Onondaga Environmental Institute, the Partnership for Onondaga Creek, the Onondaga Nation, Onondaga County, SUNY-ESF, the Syracuse CoE and others to begin implementation of the Onondaga Creek Conceptual Revitalization Plan.

STRATEGY #39

Make the construction and marketing of the Onondaga Creekwalk project a priority.



MINER
FOR MAYOR

Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY and the ENVIRONMENT

(summary)

STRATEGY #40

Work directly with the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency and surrounding towns and villages to explore ways we can develop policies that reduce sprawl and its negative environmental and social affects.

STRATEGY #41

Work with the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) and CENTRO to pursue new models for mass transit that will reduce energy consumption while also creating economic development opportunities.

STRATEGY #42

Invest in public transportation, bicycle, car-share, and pedestrian infrastructure and accommodations to reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve public health.

STRATEGY #43

Provide incentives and other administrative implements that stimulate private sector investment in alternative energy, green building, green infrastructure, Brownfield remediation and progressive design.

STRATEGY #44

Work with Syracuse City School District to make all aspects of sustainability a regular part of the curriculum and classroom activity.

Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY and the ENVIRONMENT

(cont'd.)

GOALS

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STRATEGY #33

Equip city government with personnel that can explore and implement sustainability solutions for our government and our city.

The City of Syracuse currently employs staff to deal with law enforcement, fire protection, sanitation, engineering, economic development and many other areas of responsibility. However, there is no full time city staff dedicated to promoting sustainable municipal practices or to advocating for a greener community. Sustainability principles cross disciplines and must be implemented in a comprehensive manner across all city departments. I intend to designate city staff to fulfill this responsibility.

Having staff dedicated to examining all city operations through the lens of sustainability will ensure that principles of sustainability are at the forefront of all decision-making, not afterthoughts. This staff can also work to further empower the many organizations in Syracuse who have dedicated themselves to advancing our city as a more sustainable community. FOCUS Greater Syracuse, the Center of Excellence, SUNY-ESF, GreeningUSA, and the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and their Urban Design Studio are all groups who have been advocates for the broad issues of sustainability in Syracuse. GreeningUSA's 12 Traits of Sustainability and the AIA's Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) report are two documents that already begin laying a framework for a more sustainable Syracuse and Central New York region. These and other plans must be reviewed by city staff and activated.

Having staff with the abilities to not only discern what steps should be taken to achieve greater sustainability, but also to determine how to implement those steps, will be critical. Such staff will be invaluable in ensuring municipal practices that are more ecologically sensitive as well as cost effective for the long-term fiscal solvency of the city.

STRATEGY #34

Conduct carbon footprint and ecological impact assessment for the city and for city operations and develop a long-term strategy for reductions.

Carbon Dioxide emissions is one of the most significant factors affecting the warming that our planet is experiencing. We have all heard about how global warming



MINER
FOR MAYOR

Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY and the ENVIRONMENT

(cont'd.)

poses a very serious threat to life on our planet. Climate change has the potential to endanger the Earth's coastline settlements, cause droughts in some parts of the world and floods in others, create unreliability in the world's food supply, cause habitat destruction and species extinction, and destabilize regions of the world where people may be in competition for diminishing natural resources.

As developed and developing nations alike increase in population and resource consumption, we are seeing rises in CO2 emissions. Later this year delegations from many nations will gather in Copenhagen, Denmark to discuss how CO2 reductions can be achieved. The disagreements in the global community have historically been about nations settling on shared reduction targets, and when some nations won't agree to aggressive targets then all nations shirk responsibility as if to say, "If they don't set aggressive targets then we won't either." This is not a productive tone.

We can not wait for all the nations of the world to get on board for us to do our part as a community. Syracuse should lead by example in taking CO2 emissions seriously. Our city government should conduct an assessment to determine the carbon footprint of its operations. The first phase is finding out what our emissions are and what they are generated by. After that, we will be equipped to create an action plan to make reductions in our carbon footprint. It is important for Syracuse to take these steps in order to make our community greener and healthier while also providing a leadership example in the region and the state.

STRATEGY #35

Work with OCRRA and others to increase recycling options and capacity for residents, businesses and in public places.

Syracuse has taken incredible steps in making recycling a part of our culture. Our community has become as recycling-friendly

as any in the nation. Children are taught about recycling in school and public relations campaigns by the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA) have gone a long way in educating people on what recycling is, why it is important and how people can participate. Well as our community is doing in regards to recycling education and operations more can still be done to increase our capacity.

We must work with OCRRA and our other recyclers to determine what steps should be taken to expand recycling options in Syracuse and Onondaga County. Increasing our recycling capacity is a critical component of reducing our overall waste stream as a community and this would limit our contributions to landfills.

STRATEGY #36

Explore the development of "green codes" in the City of Syracuse to increase energy generation and efficiency options, promote urban agriculture and increase efforts to improve storm water management.

Cities and states all over the country are now finding ways to reduce their ecological footprint and provide local independence by implementing "green codes." These codes often cover building codes, permitting for alternative energy operations, and zoning and land use issues. As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), better known as the economic stimulus package, the federal government required states accepting Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funds to update their state building codes to improve



MINER
FOR MAYOR

Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY and the ENVIRONMENT

(cont'd.)

energy efficiency. This is one example of how such regulations can be tailored to improve overall sustainability. The City of Syracuse must also review how our local building codes can be improved to encourage greater energy efficiency and lower carbon footprints.

Many communities are also exploring how urban agriculture can build community, reduce carbon footprints and increase local energy and food independency. Organizations like Syracuse Grows, Slow Food CNY, the Bread and Roses Collective, the Alchemical Nursery Project and others are already taking action on making our city more conducive to urban agricultural practices. Community gardening has been a large part of these efforts and such projects have made an incredible difference in our neighborhoods. These gardens beautify our city, build community amongst the gardeners and provide local sources of fresh produce to neighborhoods that experience food insecurity. These gardens have immeasurable benefits for the health of the environment as well as the gardeners and neighbors involved. The City of Syracuse must investigate how city regulations can be modified to enable citizens to produce more of their own food locally, either individually or communally.

Alternative energy production and progressive storm water management are other areas that must be considered. Things like solar panels, rain gardens, residential and large-scale wind turbines, and urban vegetable gardens were not really taken into consideration when our codes were written. Times have changed. We need to look at how these things can be facilitated in our city while being sensitive to the full spectrum of planning and neighborhood issues involved.

STRATEGY #37

Make green infrastructure techniques, urban forestry and energy efficiency measures the first choice for City operations – not the exception.

We recently saw how Onondaga County chose to alter the direction of their sewage treatment projects by scrapping the construction of sewage treatment plants in important residential and commercial areas in favor of green infrastructure. This decision was a sign that we can no longer do things the same old way. The City of Syracuse must also place an emphasis on more sustainable practices in this regard.

Green infrastructure techniques for water infrastructure, storm water management and urban forestry must be applied. Our city lost many of its older, majestic trees in the Labor Day Storm. We must continue to re-grow our urban forest as trees serve to beautify our neighborhoods, reduce the urban heat island effect and aid in storm water management.

We can also begin to explore how better storm water management can take place in the public right of way. Techniques like bioswales and pervious pavements can help reduce storm water and beautify city streets.

Additionally the City of Syracuse must look at how improved energy efficiency can be achieved in city-owned facilities and vehicles. Better efficiency for city operations isn't just better for the environment, it's better for the City's bottom line. All of these techniques should be delved into to improve our city's ecological and financial health.



MINER
FOR MAYOR

Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY and the ENVIRONMENT

(cont'd.)

STRATEGY #38

Work with the Onondaga Environmental Institute, the Partnership for Onondaga Creek, the Onondaga Nation, Onondaga County, SUNY-ESF, the Syracuse CoE and others to begin implementation of the Onondaga Creek Conceptual Revitalization Plan.

The Onondaga Creek Conceptual Revitalization Plan was sponsored by the Onondaga Lake Partnership and developed by the Onondaga Environmental Institute (OEI) beginning in 2006. This plan was a product of a highly participative and comprehensive planning effort that culminated in a final draft in April of this year. This plan represents three years of exhaustive analysis and wide-ranging visioning based on the hydrological, biological, educational and recreational aspects of the Creek along with many other considerations.

The scientific, legal and social comprehensiveness of this plan is what gives it such incredible value. Implemented recommendations of this plan have the potential to transform Onondaga Creek into a hallmark of our community. We need to begin thinking of ourselves as a waterfront community. Onondaga Creek is one of our strongest north-south connections in the City of Syracuse, and we should be taking advantage of that attribute. A Creek that has greater access for education, recreation, renaturalization and redevelopment could be a powerful driver of economic development, neighborhood revitalization, public health and a more ecologically viable creek, lake and overall Syracuse region.

STRATEGY #39

Make the construction and marketing of the Onondaga Creekwalk project a priority.

The Onondaga Creekwalk project that is being undertaken by the City of Syracuse with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is a project that is creating pedestrian and bike facilities along the Onondaga Creek corridor. Parts of the Creekwalk have been completed in the Franklin Square area and soon portions of the second phase will be completed between Franklin and Armory Squares. As this is a NYSDOT project it is geared towards the transportation of pedestrians and bicycles and does not have funding available for creek channel modification, renaturalization, biological measures or recreational access.

However, this project is helping to provide critical infrastructure for alternative transportation as well as recreational activities along the creek. We must sure that the Creekwalk project fits within a larger vision for Onondaga Creek, make sure that the project is completed in the most timely possible fashion, and make sure that the community at large is aware of the project and is poised to utilize this amenity once it is completed. Increased appreciation for and use of spaces along Onondaga Creek can only lead to greater urban vitality.

STRATEGY #40

Work directly with the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency and surrounding towns and villages to explore ways we can develop policies that reduce sprawl and its negative environmental and social affects.

In the decades since the Second World War development patterns in the US have been characterized by ever



MINER
FOR MAYOR

Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY and the ENVIRONMENT

(cont'd.)

expanding urbanized areas with spacious housing tracts and facilitating highways. The growth of suburban areas beyond traditional, densely settled cities and villages has been astounding in the last 60 years.

While metropolitan growth is often good for a region's economy and culture, unmanaged growth often leads to municipal inefficiencies, sky-rocketing infrastructure costs and spiraling disinvestment in the urban core. This has been true with the Syracuse metro area. Unplanned, unrestricted development in Onondaga County has led to a more sparsely populated region with a relatively unchanged total population. This is referred to as sprawl without growth. This pattern has been facilitated by New York State law which grants home rule, meaning that each individual city, town and village has the authority to make land use decisions. The sprawling development without population growth paradigm has grown our fossil fuel consumption and dependency, increased commuting times, reduced social and cultural connectivity, created large and expensive public infrastructure, and led to degradation in the urban core and in inner ring suburban village centers. This has set our region on an unsustainable path.

In order to have a more environmentally and economically sustainable community here in Central New York we must find ways to manage how and where we grow. Smarter growth and investment will lead to less resource consumption, stronger economic centers, better transit systems, better connection to agricultural and natural lands, improved social integration, lower taxes, and a higher overall quality of life for our region. By working in concert together we can find ways to pursue more progressive patterns of development for the next 60 years.

STRATEGY #41

Work with the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) and CENTRO to pursue new models for mass transit that will reduce energy consumption while also creating economic development opportunities.

Syracuse has a long transportation history. In fact Syracuse owes much of its very existence to the transportation industry. Without the Erie Canal Syracuse might be little more than a very small agricultural town today. Crossed by the old Genesee Turnpike, the Erie Canal and the New York Central and the Delaware, Lackawanna, & Western Railroads Syracuse's location and proximity to transportation corridors played a large role in its development. Syracuse was also home to several street car lines which carried passengers through different parts of the city. After the street car lines were removed in Syracuse buses became the primary mode of public transportation.

Our bus system, now CENTRO, services the metropolitan area, in some cases by alternative fueled vehicles. In partnership with CENTRO and the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) we need to explore how the current mass transit system can be enhanced, expanded or changed to increase ridership, reduce private vehicle miles traveled and to create economic development opportunities. A more robust system that is clean, safe and safe-feeling, very easy to use and has the flexibility and speed people are looking for may attract more people to Syracuse and will provide incredible local benefit.



MINER
FOR MAYOR

Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY and the ENVIRONMENT

(cont'd.)

We have seen elsewhere in the world that when public transit is heavily utilized it also reduces on fossil fueled, single occupancy vehicles while simultaneously provides opportunities for economic development. Whether it is bus rapid transit with dedicated bus lanes or a light rail system reminiscent of our old trolleys, we have to bear in mind the economic development potential that enhanced public transit can have on a metro area as well as on targeted zones along routes. By working with the SMTC, the New York State Department of Transportation and the Federal Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration we can apply for New Starts Funding that may eventually give us the opportunity to implement a new model that will provide economic, social and environmental benefits to the Syracuse metro area.

STRATEGY #42

Invest in public transportation, bicycle, car-share, and pedestrian infrastructure and accommodations to reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve public health.

As energy prices continue to rise annually and public consciousness of environmental issues increases people will want convenience and safety in alternative forms of transportation. As such we should be prepared to facilitate those changes by investing in infrastructure that is conducive to many forms of transportation.

The City of Syracuse should work collaboratively with Onondaga County, the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (including CENTRO), the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC), the New York State Department of Transportation, BikeCNY!, CuseCar and others to determine community needs and implementation strategies. The City of Syracuse should pursue complete streets that bring together green infrastructure and safe, easy to use facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, public transit, and car share programs. Such streets are often safer

with slower motor vehicle speeds. As a result of slower, safer streets with multi-modal accommodations such areas are generally well-suited to neighborhood-scale business development. This approach to transportation can increase the attractiveness of an area, improve public health, incite economic development and enhance the environmental quality of a place and its surroundings.

STRATEGY #43

Provide incentives and other administrative implements that stimulate private sector investment in alternative energy, green building, green infrastructure, Brownfield remediation and progressive design.

Approximately 12% of the nation's CO2 emissions comes from buildings. If we are to do our part as a community in the fight against climate change we must find ways to incite private sector action to build healthier buildings.

By using tax incentives, financing programs, faster permitting or access to Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) funding we can assist private sector developers in practicing more advanced green building techniques that will have benefits to the entire community as well as the private market. Such programs may make it easier for us to incite the private sector to design the privately-owned built environment in a more progressive and environmentally friendly way.



MINER
FOR MAYOR

Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY and the ENVIRONMENT

(cont'd.)

STRATEGY #44

Work with Syracuse City School District to make all aspects of sustainability a regular part of the curriculum and classroom activity.

Whether the topic is recycling, green building, storm water management or smart growth real, lasting change towards more sustainable lifestyles happens over many years. To achieve this change we must begin educating our children about these topics and the effect that all ways of life have on the environment and on other people around the world. That's why we need to ensure that our students are learning about these topics everyday in school from a very young age.

Programs like GreeningUSA's Sustainability Academy have provided excellent opportunities for children and adults alike to learn about what sustainability is, why it is important to all of us and how we can each participate in making our world a little greener. We must support and follow the example of these programs and begin making a more focused effort to integrate lessons of sustainability into the school curricula. With many beautiful parks and open spaces, organizations like the Center of Excellence and institutions like SUNY-ESF right here in Syracuse it should not be difficult to give our students hands-on learning experiences that will illustrate the elements and processes involved with these topics while also getting them excited about how they can play a direct role in making our community and our world a better place.



MINER
FOR MAYOR